

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mineral Peak Lookout

Other names/site number: 24MO0955

Name of related multiple property listing:

L-4 Lookouts on the Lolo National Forest

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: _____

City or town: Missoula State: Montana County: Missoula

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☒

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☐
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☒

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT

OTHER / Fire Lookout

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT / NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: 1936-plan "readicut L-4 Lookout House"

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: N/A

Walls: WOOD / Weatherboard; GLASS

Roof: WOOD / Shingle

Other: WOOD (tower) CONCRETE (tower footings)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Mineral Peak Lookout is a 1936-pattern L-4 Lookout House atop a 53-ft. straight timber tower, on Mineral Peak. At 7,447 ft. above sea level, Mineral Peak is the highest topographic feature in the surrounding area, providing expansive views of the Mission and Swan mountain ranges including: the Rattlesnake drainage to the west, the Gold Creek drainage to the east, and the Blackfoot River drainage to the south. The lookout tower is 53 ft. high, which places the actual elevation of the lookout house closer to 7,500 ft. The integrity of the lookout remains strong. On-site vegetation consists principally of subalpine fir mixed with lodgepole pine, with a dense understory of bear grass, huckleberry, and grouse whortleberry.

Narrative Description

Mineral Peak Lookout (one contributing building). Mineral Peak Lookout is a 14 ft. by 14 ft. wood frame building with a pyramidal roof built atop a 53 foot-high, timber tower. Simple drop (V-Rustic) wood siding covers the lower portion of the exterior walls, and the pyramidal roof is covered with sawn cedar shingles, stained green prior to application. A galvanized metal stove pipe extends above the roof's south slope. The entry into the lookout house is located at the east end of the south-facing wall and contains the original wood door with four lights above one panel. A ribbon of four, nine-light windows are located above the lower wall west of the door. The remaining three walls each contain a ribbon of five, four-light wood window sashes. The

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center sash opens casement style, while the remaining four are fixed. The lookout retains most of its original, top-hinged window shutters that remain in the closed position. On the front (south) wall the shutter next to the door has been removed in order to illuminate the interior. The frame outriggers that hold the shutters open remain in place on all four sides of the lookout house.

A 3-ft. wide catwalk extends along all four walls of the lookout house. The catwalk deck is made with 2 x 6 in. boards. The railing is made with 4 x 4 in. posts and 2 x 4 in. rails. (Note: the lookout blueprints called for only two rails.)

The one-room interior retains its original finishes, including fir flooring and V-Rustic siding on the wall below the windows and in the ceiling. The interior space is empty with the exception of a shelving unit topped with a piece of plywood. The shelving unit contains some forest maps as well as a visitors' register.

The four-section, straight-leg tower is braced with four guy wires. The woven wire cables are attached to the tower legs at the top of the third section on all four corners, and anchored in the ground. On the south side of the tower, a concrete step accesses the base of a four-flight stairway. The stairway has board treads and 2 x 4 in. handrails. Small landings are located at the top of the first, second, and third flights of stairs. At the top of the fourth flight, an opening in the west side of the catwalk accesses the lookout platform.

Radio repeater (one noncontributing structure). Located about 25 ft. northwest of the lookout stands a small radio repeater. The repeat box measures 4 ft. tall, and 3 ft. square. A door on the south wall provides access to the interior of the box. A small rectangular solar panel sits atop the repeater box and an antenna projects up from the east side of the box.

Integrity

Mineral Peak Lookout retains all seven aspects of historical integrity. It occupies its original site, and because of its isolated location, the property's integrity of setting, feeling and association remains exceptionally strong. The only modern intrusion to the setting is a small radio repeater. In addition, the lookout house and tower retain integrity of materials, workmanship and design. The lookout stands as an exceptional example of the once-common 1936-pattern L-4 Lookouts once included in the Lolo National Forest's fire detection system.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Politics / Government

Conservation

Architecture

Engineering

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Period of Significance

1957 - 1967

Significant Dates

1957

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Alvin F. "Snuse" McClure / builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Mineral Peak Lookout is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C, at the local and state level of significance. Under Criterion A, it is significantly associated with the US Forest Service's early fire detection program, which relied on a series of fixed lookout points from which to locate forest fires. Under Criterion C, Mineral Peak Lookout is an excellent example of a 1936 pattern L-4 Lookout House.

The Mineral Peak Lookout meets the Registration Requirements set forth in the *L-4 Lookouts on the Lolo National Forest Multiple Property Document* under the context *Role of the L-4 Lookout House in the development of the US Forest Service Region I's Fire Detection System* and the *L-4 Lookout* property type. The period of significance identified for this property extends from its construction in 1957 through 1967, the end of the historical period; it conforms to the MPD cover context period. Mineral Peak Lookout was manned as a primary lookout point from 1957 to 1967.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Lolo National Forest built the 1936-pattern, L-4 Lookout House on Mineral Peak in 1957, where it replaced an earlier L-4 lookout.¹ The Wood Fabricating Company of Portland, Oregon, shipped the materials for the new building to the forest supervisor in July of 1956.² The shipment included two sheets of blue prints or “erection plans” and a materials list, which Forest Service personnel were expected to check against the shipment. The blueprints provided details of how to assemble the floor joists, lay the 1 x 8 in. shiplap subflooring, frame the side, rear, and front walls; frame the roof and apply the roof sheathing, frame the ceiling joists, and apply the 1 x 6 in. “V Rustic” ceiling. The blueprints also included details about the catwalk and its associated railing. Specifications for the shutters, including dimensions and details of the shutter clamp arrangement, occupied a separate sheet, which indicated that “all sills and framing” for the catwalk were to be supplied by the tower contractor.

While the Portland firm provided the lookout house kit, materials and plans for the lookout tower originated from the Calvert Company, a firm based in Vancouver, Washington.³ Blueprints for the tower indicate that Calvert Company designed the tower in 1953. The close proximity of the companies suggests that they many have collaborated on supplying lookout kits to forests throughout the northwest.

When the forest began planning to erect the new lookout on Mineral Peak, the site was still only accessible by pack trail. The Missoula district ranger felt that the work would be much easier if a road were built to the peak. According to Missoula district packer, Alvin F. “Snuse” McClure, it took them just ten days to “pioneer” a 13-mile road from Gold Creek to the top of Mineral Peak, using a bulldozer and a bladder. After they were finished, they were able to drive the bundled materials to the building site.

The district used a three-man crew to erect the new lookout, consisting of McClure as supervisor, another Missoula district employee, Tony Mary, and Ben Runyan, who was borrowed from the Seeley Lake district. According to McClure, the earlier L-4 lookout was still standing when they began construction on the new lookout. The crew used the earlier lookout cab as quarters and as a kind of platform from which to stage the work. After they completed the new tower and lookout house, they knocked down the old lookout.⁴

After its completion, Mineral Peak Lookout appears to have been continually manned every summer. Its importance to the forest’s fire detection system is illustrated by a series of letters between the regional office, the Lolo, and Montana Power Company. In February of 1966, the

¹ Kresek indicates that the earlier lookout was an L-4 cab on a pole tower, built in 1935. Kresek *Fire Lookouts of the Northwest*, 1984, p. 368.

² E. W. Carpenter, President, Wood Fabricating Company, to Forest Supervisor, July 6, 1956. Folder 7300 Buildings and Other Structures, Mineral Mountain Lookout. Missoula Ranger District Files, Lolo National Forest, Missoula, MT. This letter stated that the company had sent a grade certificate covering materials unit in the production of the unit had been sent to the Forest Service Architect in Region 6, who was “authorized to handle inspection” for Region 1.

³ Established in 1947, the Calvert Company of Vancouver, Washington is still in business, currently specializing in glulam products. www.calvertgluma.com, accessed 4/11/2017.

⁴ Transcribed interview with Alvin F. “Snuse” McClure, by Libby Langston, conducted on August 13, 2008. Available at Lolo National Forest East Zone Heritage Files.

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regional lands office notified the forest that Mineral Peak Lookout was located on land owned by Montana Power Company, and that they were unable to find any record of a lease agreement between the forest service and the company. In short order, the forest service drafted a plat of a proposed lease site and sent it to the company, which in turn agreed to lease the site back to the forest for \$25.00 a year.⁵ The region was anxious to have the lease run for as long a period as possible stating that: "Mineral is one of our primary lookouts which we plan to occupy year after year."⁶ Indeed, the Lolo included Mineral Peak as one of twenty-six lookouts to be manned during the 1967 fire season.⁷

In 1968, an inspection of the lookout reported that over the ten-year period between 1958 and 1967, the average number of first discovery fires identified from Mineral Peak was only 1.4. Also, the 15,400 acres of seen area from the lookout contained no areas of high value timber, no areas with fuels subject to extreme or high rates of fire spread, and none within the half to one hour control zones. Although the lookout was reported to be in good condition, the road into the site was poor. Perhaps because of these deficiencies, by 1974 Mineral Peak Lookout had been downgraded to an emergency lookout, i.e. a lookout manned only during extreme fire danger.⁸

In 1980, the Missoula District ranger proposed moving Mineral Peak Lookout to Sliderock Lookout—the latter located on the divide separating Flint Creek and Rock Creek, southeast of Clinton, Montana. The proposal was not particularly well received by the supervisor's office. Bob Pertille, Program Officer in charge of Technical Services wrote that although it was feasible to move Mineral Peak Lookout to Sliderock, the cost would be between \$10,000 and \$15,000, and he wondered if the investment was acceptable given the remaining life of the lookout. He also stated that replacing Sliderock Lookout was the third priority for the forest, indicating that the money might be better spent on higher priorities. The proposal was dropped and Mineral Peak Lookout stayed on Mineral Peak.⁹

Between 1980 and about 2005, Mineral Peak sat vacant with little or no maintenance. In 2005, however, largely because of interest by district employee Libby Langston, Missoula Ranger District initiated restoration of the lookout. Initial work included an inspection of the tower, which was found to be in stable condition. Work included: treating the tower with a mixture of mineral spirits and linseed oil; tightening all the bolts in the entire lookout structure; replacing some of the lower diagonal structural members in the tower and some cracked stair treads; installing new brace supports for the guy wires, and re-hanging the lookout door. In 2006, the windows and the door were removed and taken to the Region 1 Historic Preservation Team shop in Missoula, where they were restored. They were reinstalled in July and August of 2008. An

⁵ J. H. Briney MPC Land Department to Forest Supervisor, Lolo National Forest, February 24, 1966. Folder 7300 Buildings and Other Structures, Mineral Mountain Lookout. Missoula Ranger District Files, Lolo National Forest, Missoula, MT.

⁶ Regional Forester to R. V. Bruce, Acting Forest Supervisor, March 2, 1966. Folder 7300 Buildings and Other Structures, Mineral Mountain Lookout. Missoula Ranger District Files, Lolo National Forest, Missoula, MT.

⁷ "List of Lookouts in R 1 1967." Folder: 5100 Lookouts Historical 2 of 2, Box 45, RG95 Historical Collection, NARA Seattle. This list includes only manned units.

⁸ Lookout inspection form Mineral Peak Lookout, completed August 28, 1968. Folder 7300 Buildings and Other Structures, Mineral Mountain Lookout. Missoula Ranger District Files, Lolo National Forest, Missoula, MT.

⁹ Robert P. Pertille to District Ranger, Missoula RD, July 31, 1980. Folder 7300 Buildings and Other Structures, Mineral Mountain Lookout. Missoula Ranger District Files, Lolo National Forest, Missoula, MT.

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outhouse, once associated with the lookout house was destroyed by vandals sometime between 2006 and 2008.

In 2012, members of the regional preservation team and volunteers installed a new, sawn cedar shingle roof. After the roof was completed, a contractor reinstalled lightning protection—the original copper wire having been stolen prior to the initiation of restoration work.

Since the completion of the roofing project, Mineral Peak Lookout has remained vacant. Initial attempts to place it on the Forest Service cabin rental program were discouraged because of the difficult access and the perceived danger of the 50-ft. tower. Currently it serves as a destination point for hikers and backpackers, some of whom stay in the lookout house.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Kresek, Ray

1984 *Fire Lookouts of the Northwest*. Fairfield Washington: Ye Galleon Press.

RG 95 Records of the US Forest Service, National Archives and Records Administration, Seattle, Washington.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository: National Archives and Records Administration, Seattle

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Roughly one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 47.003506

Longitude: -113.81329424276012

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 12

Easting: 286137.59

Northing: 5209395.4

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of this property is an arbitrary line drawn to encompass the area on top of Mineral Peak that contains the lookout, roughly corresponding to the 7,440' contour interval.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encloses the primary improvement at this location, namely the lookout house and tower and associated features.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Janene Caywood
organization: CRCS
street & number: 1002 South 6th St. West
city or town: Missoula state: MT zip code: 59801
e-mail: crs@montana.com
telephone: 406 728-9190
date: April 4, 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

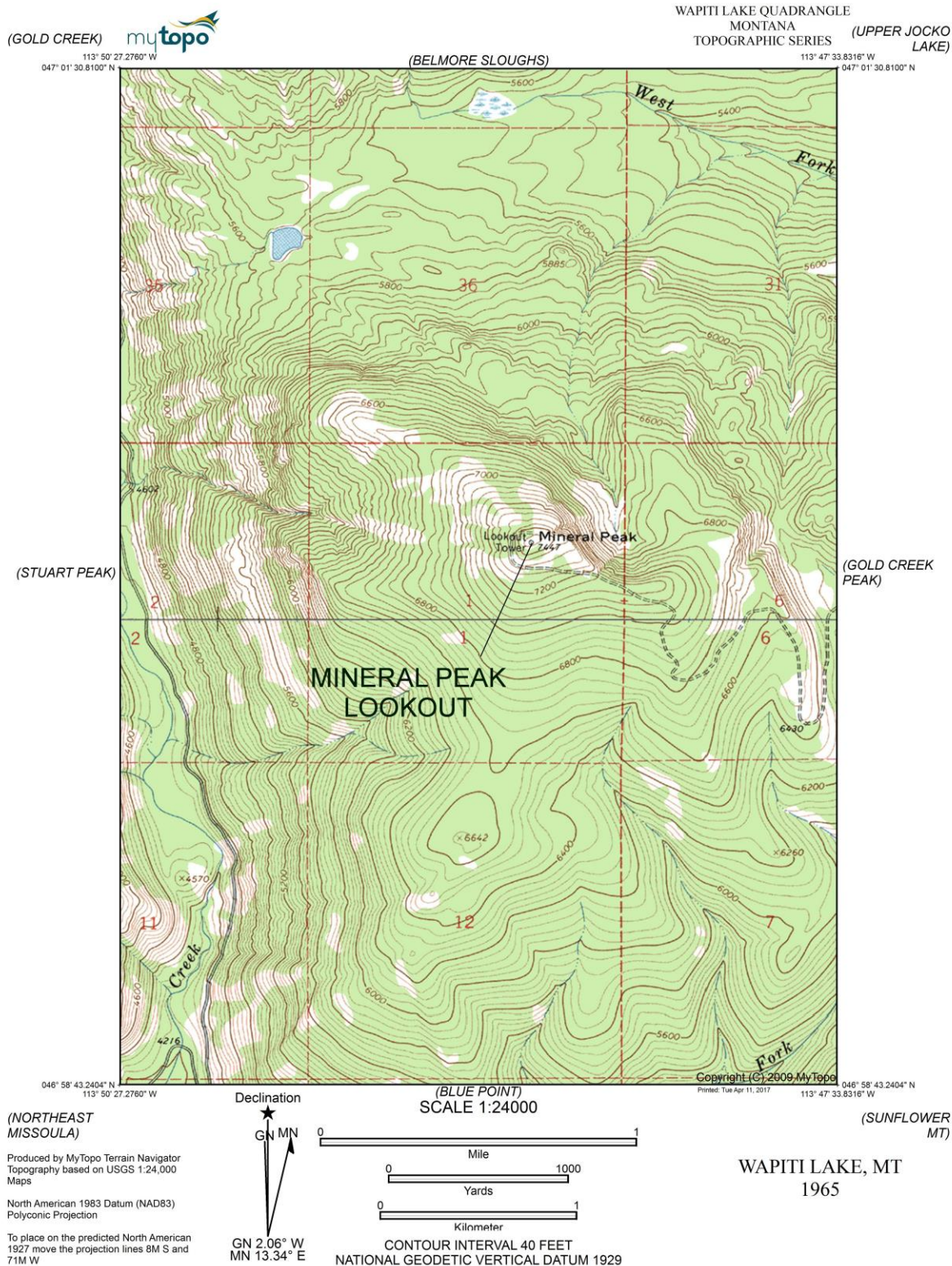
- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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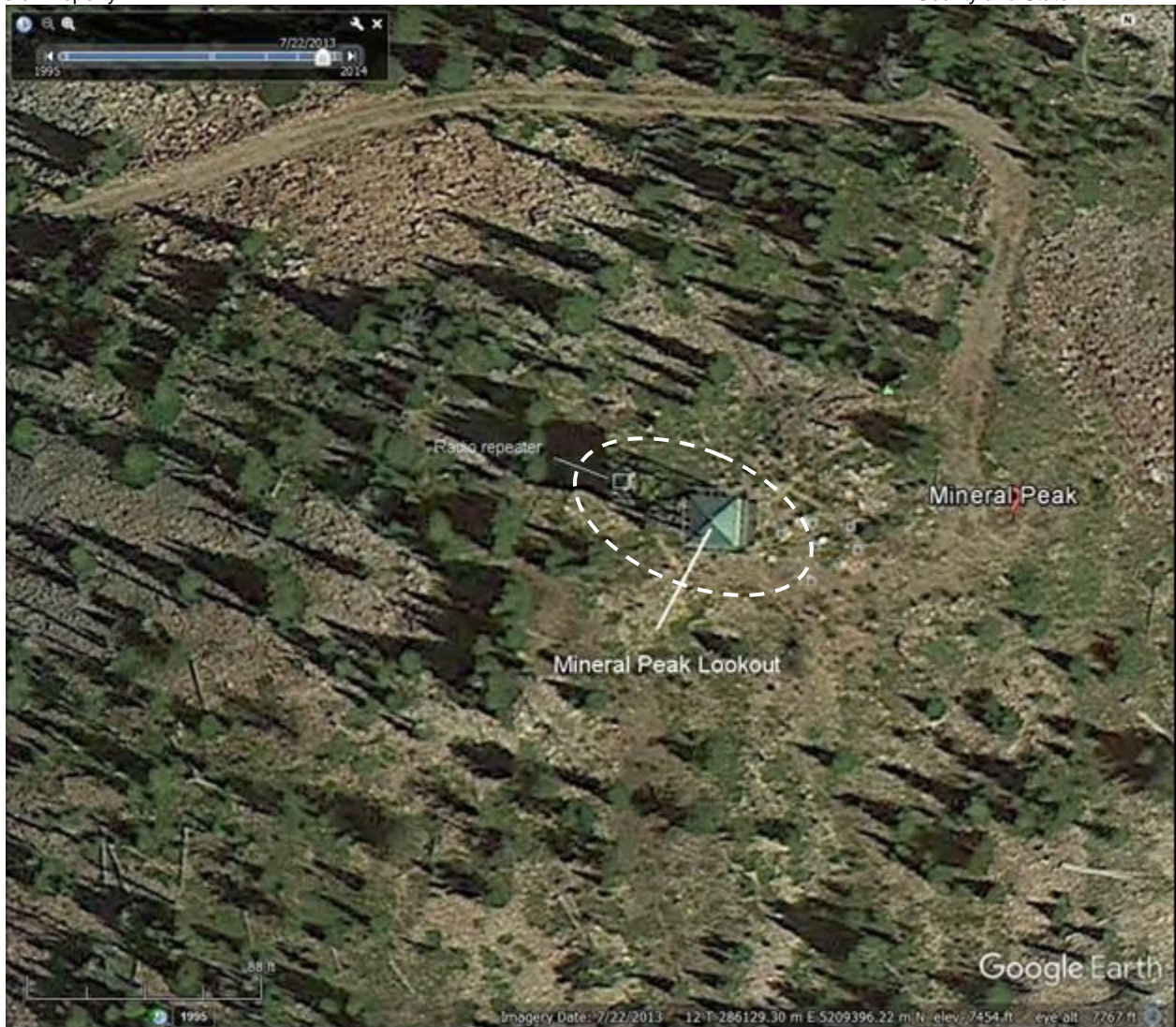


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2013 Aerial view of Mineral Peak Lookout.

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

All Photographs

Name of Property: Mineral Peak Lookout

City or Vicinity: Missoula

County: Missoula State: Montana

Photographer: Janene Caywood

Date Photographed: September 10, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of ____.

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MT_MissoulaCounty_MineralPeakLookout_0001. Looking north to the south side of Mineral Peak Lookout.

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MT_MissoulaCounty_MineralPeakLookout_0002. Looking southwest to the east and north sides of Mineral Peak Lookout.

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MT_MissoulaCounty_MineralPeakLookout_0003. Looking northwest to the south and east sides of Mineral Peak Lookout. The radio relay and weather station visible in left of photo.

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MT_MissoulaCounty_MineralPeakLookout_0004. Looking east along the front (south) wall of the lookout.

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MT_MissoulaCounty_MineralPeakLookout_0005. Looking south to the front wall of the lookout house from the interior.

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MT_MissoulaCounty_MineralPeakLookout_0006. Detail of the lookout interior w/ shelving unit.

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MT_MissoulaCounty_MineralPeakLookout_0007. Detail of guy wire anchors.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.